

# SIT A SPELL

By Joquita Burka

Just a few pieces of wood attached to the front of the house. Simple in its architecture. Sparsely decorated. Infinitely inviting. It is the porch. More specifically, it is the front porch. And I love it.

On my porch, you will find two Kennedy rocking chairs, a porch swing, ceiling fans and, depending on the season, ferns/impatiens/mums/pansies. Best of all, on my porch you will often find people.

A front porch does not require a formal invitation. It says, "Feel free to stop by." Neighbors who have never been inside my house don't think a thing of standing and chatting about weather, kids or local issues.

This is where my neighbor and I have rocked and shared our philosophy on child rearing. My mother-in-law, who far prefers the outdoors over the indoors, loves the lazy motion of the swing, and there takes the time to tell me a bit about her childhood and memories of her parents. To the slow click of the swing's chain my daughters have revealed their teenage uncertainties and their grown-up dreams. Here they sit with cell phone to ear and chat endlessly.

On this porch we've watched thunderstorms roll across the sky, fireflies blink and leaves fall. We've photographed Easter bonnets and family reunions, prom dates and homecoming beauties. It's the perfect place for early morning coffee in the fall and homemade ice cream in the summer. It's visiting without the commitment. Intimacy without the intensity.

Perhaps the heat first drew us out to our porches. But today it is the peace, the community, the people that keep us there.

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